Classroom Organization and Management Planning Guide

Step One: Develop a Statement of Purpose

What? A purpose statement is one that makes clear the major goals or mission of the classroom.
Why? It lays the foundation for the rest of the management plan; it makes essential the elements of the reason for the teacher to be teaching and the students to be learning.
When? It should be completed before implementing other components of the behavior management plan.
How? It should be written to meet three criteria:

- focused

- direct/ clearly understood

- jargon-free

Example: *"Our classroom will provide a safe, positive learning environment, which promotes cooperation, creativity and academic success. All students will be active participants in the educational process in order to achieve their full potential."*

Step Two: Develop a Set of 3 to 5 Classroom Rules

"Although the rules and procedures used by effective classroom managers vary from teacher to teacher, we do not find effectively managed classrooms operating without them." Source: Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, & Worsham. 1982 in Organizing and Managing the Junior High School Classroom.

Classroom rules set the behavioral expectation and allow common ground between the teacher and the student. Teachers specify the rules and students know what they need to do in order to meet the behavioral expectations of the teacher. Good classroom rules explicit, clear and succinct. There should be 3 to 5 rules that are specific, observable and measurable, stated in positive terms, and convey the expected behavior.

Guidelines for Writing Rules

Rules govern relationships with others, time, space and materials. They are consistent across situations and few in number. The eight guidelines below can help you develop effective rules for your classroom.

1. **Consistent with school rules.** Classroom rules should not conflict with school rules; school rules should be in effect in the classroom.
2. **Understandable**. Rules must be stated so that students clearly understand what is meant. Vocabulary should be consistent with students' grade and or ability level.
3. **Doable.** Rules must be such that students are capable of following them. They must be within students' maturation level and mental and physical abilities.
4. **Manageable.** Rules should be easily monitored and not require excessive classroom time to hold students accountable.
5. **Always applicable.** Rules should be consistent across situations; they should not vary or change.
6. **Stated positively**. Stating rules positively encourages the desired behavior. Although it is sometimes difficult to state all rules positively, most "don'ts" can be transformed to "do's." (Even "No gum" can be stated as "Leave all gum at home.")
7. **Stated behaviorally.** Rules are easily understood and monitored when defined with action statements beginning with a verb – statements that describe what students are to "do" – such as "Leave all gum at home" or "Bring needed materials to class."

Good Rule Examples (specific, observable, measurable, positive and convey expected behavior)	Inappropriate Rules
Keep hands and feet to yourself	Respect others
Turn in completed assignments on time	Think before responding.
Walk in the hallways	Don't run.
Come to class on time, prepared, with all supplies and assignments.	Be a good student.
Sit in your seat unless you have permission to leave it.	Be responsible
Work when you are supposed to.	Be ready to learn
Unless you have permission to speak, talk only about your work.	Do your best
Follow directions immediately	Respect authority

Test your rules:

☐ My rules are observable and measurable.

☐ My rules are positively stated.

☐ I have only 3 to 5 rules.

☐ My rules convey the expected behavior.

☐ I have a compliance rule

Step Three: Identify and Develop Procedures

Classroom procedures are patterns for accomplishing classroom tasks. Procedures form routines that help the students help the students meet the expectations stated in the rules. Both rules and routines must be taught, practiced and consistently enforced to be effective in the classroom. It is important that procedures be written in succinct terminology, positively stated, in age-appropriate terms.

When developing procedures, keep "Who, what, when, where, why, and how" in mind

- WHY is this procedure needed?
- WHERE is this procedure needed?
- WHAT is the procedure?
- WHAT are the steps for successful completion of the procedure?
- WHO needs to be taught this procedure?
- WHO will teach this procedure
- WHEN is this procedure needed?
- WHEN will the procedure be taught?
- WHEN will the procedure be practiced?
- HOW will you recognize procedure compliance?

Complete a procedural plan sheet for each of the following:

☐ Attention signal
☐ Gain teacher assistance or attention
☐ Start of class
☐ Working in groups
☐ Working independently

❑   Obtaining materials and supplied
❑   Managing personal belongings (e.g. hat, coat, backpack, etc.)
❑   Entering/exiting the classroom

Step Four: Develop a continuum of positive consequences to encourage appropriate behavior.

Consequences follow student behavior, and serve to either increase or decrease student behavior. Effective consequences preserve the student's dignity, increase their internal locus of control (i.e., students see the link between what they do and what happens), and increase the student's motivation. Consequences work best when they are: (1) clear and specific, (2) directly related to rules and procedures (3) arranged in a hierarchy and (4) natural and logical. It's important to have a continuum of positive consequences, ranging from frequent to long term, to encourage and maintain appropriate behavior.

Level 1 - free and frequent = used everyday in the classroom involving praise, perhaps stickers... easy things the teachers normally deliver.

Level 2 – intermittent = more powerful and can be awarded as perhaps a student of the week, student of the month, occasional free time

Level 3 - strong and long term = year-long, or month-long types of recognition that students can work for, perhaps a special trip, working in the office, serving as a peer assistant.

Examples:

Free & Frequent	Intermittent	Strong & Long Term
Verbal Praise	Phone calls	Field trips
Smile	Special Privileges	Special Projects
Stickers	Extra Computer Time	Recognition to the Principal
Rubber Stamps	Special Seat	Student of the Week
Thumbs up		Honor Roll
Home notes		

be educative and not vindictive. Your job is not to get back at the kids but to decrease problem behavior. In developing negative consequences, it is best to develop a negative consequence hierarchy in the classroom, ranging from least intrusive (e.g., rule reminder) to most intrusive (e.g., requiring an office referral).

Consequences for "repeat offenders" should start at the top of the hierarchy and move to more intrusive consequences. Major rule violations should receive more severe consequences than minor rule violations.

When developing negative consequences, make sure that they are:

- logical
- natural to the classroom environment
- connected to the classroom rules
- educative, not vindictive

Step Five: Develop a continuum of negative consequences to discourage inappropriate behavior.

Negative consequences must be educative and not vindictive. In developing negative consequences, it is best to develop a negative consequence hierarchy in the classroom, ranging from least intrusive (e.g., rule reminder) to most intrusive (e.g., requiring an office referral).

Consequences for "repeat offenders" should start at the top of the hierarchy and move to more intrusive consequences. Major rule violations should receive more severe consequences than minor rule violations. When developing negative consequences, make sure that they are (1) logical, (2) natural to the classroom environment, (3) connected to classroom rules and (4) educative, not vindictive.

Example:

Level 1: Class rule reminder
Level 2: Individual rule reminder
Level 3: Environmental modification (e.g. change seat)
Level 4: Parent contact
Level 5: After school detention
Level 6: Office referral

Step Six: Develop a Crisis Plan

For a classroom teacher, the key components of a crisis plan often include getting immediate assistance for either behavioral or medical situations. Behavioral situations might include scenarios when a student's behavior is out of control, potentially self-injurious, or potentially harmful to others in the environment. A medical emergency might include situations where a student is having a "sickling crisis" due to sickle cell disease, a seizure, or an asthma attack.

By developing preplanned and well thought-out strategies for dealing with a crisis, a teacher can subsequently (a) reduce the uncertainty of what actions he or she may take; (b) increase their control of a situation; and (c)decrease their own anxiety, fear or frustration about handling a crisis.

When developing your plan, it is important to include the following:

o   Who will seek assistance (e.g., the teacher, another student)
o   Who will be notified (e.g., the office, the nurse)
o   What you want the rest of the students to do during the crisis (e.g., get help, continue working, give the student in crisis some space by backing away)
o   What you will do after the crisis is over (e.g., talk to the student, contact parents)

Example Behavior Crisis Plan

1.   Send designated student to the office with Behavior Crisis Card
2.   Send rest of class to Miss Burke's room.
3.   Help crisis student re-establish self control.
4.   Bring students back to class once control is re-established.
5.   Follow up with phone call home and Crisis-Follow-up Sheet

Example Medical Crisis Plan

1.   Send designated student to office/nurse with Medical Crisis Card.
2.   If needed, have rest of students help with furniture (e.g. move if student is having seizure)
3.   Monitor student
4.   Reassure student after episode is over.
5.   Fill out crisis follow-up sheet and notify parents

Step Seven: Develop an Action Plan

Action plans can contain several key items.

1. **A toolkit.** These are the posters, forms, and materials that a teacher will need in order to implement a behavior management plan. For example, a toolkit might include posters for each procedure that the students will learn, behavior and medical crisis forms, and post cards to send home when students have successfully followed the behavior management plan.
2. **Lessons for teaching the plan to students.** Teachers will need to take the time to teach the specific rules and procedures that they expect the students to follow. An action plan can include the lessons, a timeline for when these lessons will occur, and the order in which they will be taught.
3. **A method for teaching the plan to parents.** The behavior management plan will be more successful if parents are aware and supportive of classroom expectations. Including information in the action plan about how to include parents in this process is very important.
4. **Recognition activities for students.** Students who demonstrate success in the plan deserve to be recognized. A behavior management plan will be more successful if students are rewarded for following it (remember all those positive consequences!). Building recognition activities into an action plan is just one more reminder for teachers to reinforce that positive behavior.
5. **Booster sessions for students.** A good action plan will include planned lessons throughout the year where the components of the comprehensive behavior management plan are reviewed with the students. Periodic review helps to remind everyone of expected behavior and keeps the plan running smoothly.

Sample Tool Kit

Area	What is to be accomplished	How will it be accomplished	Date accomplished
Toolkit	Providing a substitute teacher folder	Create a folder with all necessary information to implement behavior plan.	Prior to start of school
	Making posters for rules and procedures	Enlarge rules sheet to poster size. Select key procedures for first day of school, enlarge them, and post them.	Prior to start of school
	Creating postcards for positive parent contacts	Print out or copy postcards so that only student names and positive behaviors need be added.	Prior to start of school
	Preparing a "Student of the Week" program	Design certificate. Set up "Student of the Week" Desk.	Prior to start of school

Teaching the plan to students	Generating a brochure to present the key components of the plan	Use word processing or publishing software.	Prior to start of school
	Teaching relevant aspects of plan	Develop and implement a lesson plan.	First week of school
	Devising role play	Using cooperative learning, have groups of students select a rule and model what it looks like.	Second week of school
	Developing practice activities for rules	Create practice activities that use storybooks, songs, and creative arts.	Second week of school and, as needed, throughout school year
Booster session	Scheduling booster sessions	In lesson plan book, at predetermined intervals, note need to review essential components.	Prior to start to school
	Delivering booster sessions	Prior to scheduled booster session, select component of management system to be highlighted.	Throughout school year
Disseminate plan	Disseminating to parents	Present plan at back-to-school night. Duplicate extra brochures. Have parents sign student homework on plan. Call parents who weren't able to attend back-to-school night.	Third week of school
	Disseminating to administrators	Meet with administrators to review plan.	Prior to the start of school, and before printing brochures